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16. — *Intermèdes et Poèmes*. Par HENRI BLAZE DE BURY. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères. 1859. 16mo. pp. 371.

THE first and longest of these pieces, "Jenny Plautin," is a story of French literary life, the leading incident of which is the heroine's committing suicide in order to start into activity and spur on to fame her husband's aspiring but unproductive genius. The device issues in making him a *roué*, and in degrading his ambition to the standard of his ability. Of course, anywhere but in France, where suicide is turned into a dramatic art, and life is held at a lower price than the most paltry whim, this plot would be absurd: there it is less strange, less incredible than well-authenticated facts of the same order have sometimes seemed. The characters in this metrical *nouvellette* are drawn with singular clearness of outline, and the heroine, notwithstanding her melodramatic exit from the stage, is a woman of surpassing nobleness of spirit, uniting strength and tenderness as they are seldom seen blended in actual life. The versification is smooth and harmonious, and the entire poem gives us a very high appreciation of the author's wealth of imagination and command of the resources of his language. The other pieces in the volume are of kindred merit, though less unique, or perhaps we should rather say less exclusively French, in the material from which they are elaborated.

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17. — *Modern Philology: its Discoveries, History, and Influence. With Maps, Tabular Views, and an Index*. By BENJAMIN W. DWIGHT, Author of "The Higher Christian Education." New York: A. S. Barnes and Burr. 1859. 8vo. pp. 354.

IN this book Mr. Dwight has expanded and elaborated into treatises, that must hold a permanent and honored place in the higher literature of our day, several articles which won distinguished regard in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* and the *New Englander*. Besides tabular views of languages in their classes and affiliations, and philological maps of Asia and Europe, drawn and collected with exquisite skill, and condensing a vast amount of erudition, the volume consists of three treatises. The first is an "Historical Sketch of the Indo-European Languages." Among the conclusions drawn by the author from the materials under his hand are the unity of the human race, and the Divine origin of language. For the first of these conclusions we cannot but regard the philological argument as by far the strongest, and, considered by itself alone, as decisive; while there are certain moral considerations as

to the mode in which the early families of mankind must have come into being, if they sprang from a single parent stock, which, to say the least, render the opposite theory more consonant with the natural and revealed law of God. The Divine origin of language is ably, and in our judgment satisfactorily maintained, by an exhibition of the difficulties attending the theory of gradual development, and the absurdity of the only remaining alternative, the elaboration of the primitive language by a single human mind. The second treatise is a "History of Modern Philology." The third is on "The Science of Etymology." In this full justice is done to the pervading and penetrating influence of the Sanscrit, as traceable in the classical and the modern European tongues, while the author earnestly protests against the stress laid by forced and fanciful derivations on the far less influential Semitic element. The entire work merits a careful review by some adept in the department to which it belongs. Had it not come into our hands at a very late stage of our labors on the present number, though we might feel inadequate to its thorough criticism, we should not have dismissed it with this cursory notice. We hope to recur to it, in a future issue, for the full consideration of the author's views and reasonings.

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- 18.—*The Life of Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells.* By GEORGE L. DUYCKINCK. New York. 1859. 12mo. pp. 316.

BISHOP KEN is known wherever Christian worship finds utterance in the English tongue, by his inimitably beautiful Morning, Evening, and Midnight Hymns; and, had this volume no other attraction, we should hold it in dear esteem as having made us for the first time acquainted with the entire and genuine originals of those lyrics, which have been necessarily curtailed for use in the churches, and wantonly altered by the depraved taste of compilers. The good Bishop, if in that respect wise, would have suffered his fame as a poet to rest on these hymns. He unfortunately left for posthumous publication a mass of verse, which fills four large duodecimos, and of which the greater part is not worth the paper it covers. It is a noteworthy fact, that some of the finest devotional lyrics in our language have been composed by men who, in their longer metrical productions, were the merest drivellers. For songs of praise an effluent fancy is, perhaps, an unpropitious endowment, mingling too many terrene images and associations with strains that are least inadequate when they simply present the soul's relations to its Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. But the deficiency, which in this one aspect is a precious gift, is fatal in all